

25 APR 1975 Dom

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# ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

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CI/R&A

2 C 29

EXTENSION

NO.

XAE 841

DATE

10 May 1973

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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100-6-139/3

Craig

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XAE-841

10 May 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Status of the Military Files  
at Fort Holabird

1. On 8 May 1973 [ ] of CI/R&A/MR and I visited the records repository at Fort Holabird in Baltimore in order to determine the status of the military records held there. [ ] also had an interest in determining the location of certain records and will be reporting separately. Before our departure Merrill Kelly of ACSI made arrangements for us to talk with Col. Philip Robbins, who is in charge of all US Army records at Fort Holabird. Kelly also assigned John Starkey of his staff to accompany us on this visit.

2. In the course of our conversation with Col. Robbins and with several specialists whom we consulted as necessary, we learned the following:

a. The central index to all military records (DCII - Defense Central Intelligence Index) is essentially to remain intact. This index is under the control of the Department of Defense and contains card references leading to documents which are held independently by the various military as well as other US Government agencies. The US Army has no control over this index. Because of its location on an Army post, in the very same building which also houses the Army's records, a great deal of confusion has arisen in the past in attempts to understand the various equities.

b. Because of an impending move of the Army's records from Fort Holabird to Fort Meade, Maryland, there seems to have been an assumption that DOD's central index will also be moved. That is not the case. The index is to remain

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where it is for about a year. Fort Holabird is to be deactivated and the real estate will then be turned over to the local authorities. Nobody knows at this time where the central index will then be located.

c. Col. Robbins plans to destroy no Army records. He does not, however, want to be saddled with bulky records which have been used very rarely or for which there has never been a call. He therefore plans to recommend to DOD via ACSI that such inactive records be either microfilmed or transferred to one of the National Archives' records centers. He prefers microfilming. If ACSI and DOD opt for transfer, however, he believes that the central index references should be removed and turned over to the records center along with the documents. The ultimate decision, however, rests with DOD. The scope of the conversion to microfilm or transfer will not be known until Col. Robbins is told how much space and what kind of facilities he will have at Fort Meade.

d. The records of the former Army repository at Stuttgart, Germany (CR - Central Reference) are considered a part of the holdings of the US Army at Fort Holabird and are slated for transfer to Fort Meade along with all Army files. The CR records have been indexed in the central index and no purge is planned. A time lag exists in keeping the index up to date with cards on current operations. In such cases the USAREUR Liaison Team at Fort Holabird should be consulted.

e. Certain Army files were never fully indexed and there are no plans to do so now. They are, however, indexed by topic and may be recovered through impersonal index cards. Thus a person in whom the Army did not have a direct interest may not be indexed, although his name could appear in a document held in a file, for example, on Romanian intelligence. For this reason CI/OA, the Office of Security, or anyone else checking a name in the central index would be wise to indicate known or suspected affiliation with any organization. The name check procedures of the central index require look-up in impersonal records, if appropriate or possible file titles are cited.

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f. About three years ago the Army transferred its extensive Far East records, generally known as the Zama files, to Fort Holabird. These records have not been carded in the central index and must be checked separately. The records contain extensive information on nationals of various Far Eastern countries who were born in 1945 or before then. The Office of Security has a representative permanently stationed at Fort Holabird. He services all Office of Security name checks at Fort Holabird, including actions involving CSA's, POA's, and OA's. I spoke with him and he told me that, as a rule, he does not check the Zama files in routine cases involving nationals of Far Eastern countries. He does on occasion request a check of those records, but only, if there is a direct and specific indication that those files might contain information on a particular subject of a name check. There is uncertainty whether these records are to be transferred to Fort Meade along with the other Army holdings. Calls for checks in these records have been very infrequent.

3. At the outset of our discussion I explained to Col. Robbins that our visit was strictly of a fact-finding nature. I made it very plain that we did not desire to inject ourselves into Army and DOD considerations and that we are unable to commit any funds or personnel in this respect. We are certainly in no position to assume custody of any of the records or responsibility for them. I did suggest that consideration be given to retaining the index card to a document transferred to a National Archives records center. In such event the card could simply indicate the location of the document. Col. Robbins stated the suggestion had merit and should be brought to the attention of DOD. John Starkey said he would discuss it with Merrill Kelly, who would have to talk with the appropriate official in DOD.

4. The discussion was very cordial. Col. Robbins was most forthcoming with full and lucid answers to all questions. No problems were encountered and no disagreements arose.

CI/R&A

Distribution:

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